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U.S. President, 1921-1923 (Harding)

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REMARKS
OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES

at a Luncheon

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
OCTOBER 26, 1921



WASHINGTON
1921



Grand Review

AT LUNCHEON, BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 26, 1921.

SENATOR UNDERWOOD, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: It is very pleasing indeed to be presented to a company in Alabama by Senator Underwood. There is a personal side to public life which is its chief compensation other than that which comes of the consciousness of service.

Viewing government from afar, the average American citizen little realizes how simple it is. He little stops to consider that the men and women who are making public history are very much like those who look on from the hearthstones of the Republic, except they are clothed with authority by the people for whom they act. And he little realizes how little of narrow partisanship is displayed when a problem which is vital to American security is in process of solution. Men who are really worth while are simpler than they are appraised, and vastly greater than many partisans have measured them.

It was my good fortune to establish two pleasing and helpful friendships with stalwart statesmen from Alabama. I entered the Senate when you commissioned Senator Underwood to that body, and somehow, I never knew just why, we began with a "paired" agreement to protect each other's votes. That arrangement held until I retired from the Senate, and we rarely, if ever, had to ask each other for instruction. There was a confident, respectful, and cordial friendship from the beginning, and it was never embarrassed. Perhaps I need not tell you that my high opinion and affectionate regard still abide. Not so very long ago it became my duty to choose four outstanding Americans to represent our Republic in a conference with the statesmen of the leading nations of the world. It was not a personal regard alone, but that feeling combined with a high estimate of his statesmanship and his lofty devotion to country, impelled me to name him as one of four to speak for America in a conference pregnant with incalculable possibilities. I know, as you know, he will serve us well, honoring himself, his friends and neighbors, and the land for which he speaks.

But I must speak of another Alabama friend, with a genuine sorrow that he is no longer here to join with you in your cordiality of welcome. I had a deep respect for dear, old Senator Bankhead, and I know we shared affectionate personal regards. In him you had and the Nation had a stalwart statesman and a fearless defender.

